Name of licensee	Agra	Amount outstanding on 15.11.98 as (Rs. in Crs.)	No. of subscribers on 30.9.98
M/s Usha	Calcutta	0.54	24678
M/s Bharati	Delhi	12.87	99002
M/s Sterling	Delhi	9.78	95622
M/s BPL	Mumbai	13.22	87505
M/s H. Max	Mumbai	14.50	97262
M/s RPG	Chennai	1.76	15869
M/s Skycell	Chennai	1.84	18299
	TOTAL	58.31	457342

Khagaria Telephone Exchange

542, SHRI JAGDAMBI MANDAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a new building having the telephone capacity for about 5000 lines has been built up by Government at Khagaria (Bihar);

(b) if so, when this building was completed and the amount involved;

(c) whether it is also a fact that no staff has been provided for shifting the telecom office from old premises to the new building so far;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) by when the same is likely to be made functional and more telephone released in the area?

THE MINSITER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The building alongwith environmental works is likely to be completed by December, 1998. Total expenditure involved is estimated to be Rs. 65,00,000'-.

(c) No Sir, In fact, staff is available for shifting the Telecom Office from the old premises to the new Building. However**,** the shift will take place after the installation of Telecom equipment is taken in hand.

(d) Not applicable.

(e) The Telecom equipment will be made functional by March 1999 and Telephone connections released thereafter.

Shortage of Telecom Staff in NER

543. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether understaffing is an important cause of poor performance of the telecom sector in the North-Eastern Region (NER);

(b) if so, category-wise, shortage of manpower and steps taken to man the department with optimum strength; and

(c) the compelling reasons to run the department understaffed and measures initiated to overcome the situation by special recruitment drive or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, understaffing is not the cause. However, service is affected in some of the pockets due to difficult terrain and other related problems.

(b) The present vacancy position is summarised below:

	Sanc-tioned	Post-ed	Vacant
Group A	92	77	15
Group B	398	331	67

Out of this 3 Group 'A' officers and 55 Group 'B' officers have recently been-posted.

(c) 11 posts of Group 'A' have been recently created. These are likely to be filled up shortly. Vacancies do arise on completion of two years tenure, and action is continuously taken to fill up the posts as and when they arise.

P.C.O. Connections in Bihar

544. CHAUDHARY HARMOHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answers to Unstarred Questions 434, 627 and 1375 given in the Rajya Sabha on 26th February, 1997, 2nd June, 1998 and 9th June, 1998, respectively and state;

(a) whether all the rural women in Trimubani Ghat, Bahara, Darbhanga (Bihar) who have applied for the PCO/ ISD/STD connection during the year 1996-97 and 1997-98 have got the connection;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) Sir, only two applications in Trimubani Ghat and Bahara of Darbhanga District (Bihar) are pending for the year 1997-98. They will be provided STD PCOs after expansion of Benipur Exchange and approval by the PCO allotment committee.

Vacant Posts of Superintendent of Post Offices

545. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of districts in West Bengal in which the posts of Superintendent of post offices are lying vacant during the last six months; and

(b) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF'COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Only, One.

(b) Officers posted successively against the vacant post of Superintendent of Post Offices, Murshidabad have not joined. Presently, a case filed in the Central Administrative Tribunal against the order of posting is pending. Superintendent of Post Offices, Birbhum Division is holding the charge of Murshidabad Division as an additional charge.

डाक सेवाओं के प्रभारों में वृद्धि

546. **श्री रामजी लाल :** क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने 31 अगस्त, 1998 से डाक सेवाओं के प्रभारों में भारी वृद्धि की थी;

(ख) यदि हां तो, इसके क्या कारण थे और यह निर्णय कब लिया गया था, और

(ग) डाक सेवाओं के प्रभारो में वृद्धि से सरकार को कितनी आय होगी?

संचार मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री कबीन्द्र पुरकायस्थ) : (क) और (ख) 31 अगस्त, 1998 से केवल आठ डाक सेवाओं के संबंध में शुल्क में संशोधन किया गया था। ताकि उन विभिन्न डाक सेवाओं की बढ़ी हुई प्रचालन लागत को पूरा किया जा सकें, जिनके लिए आम बजट से अत्याधिक आर्थिक सहायता लेनी पड़ती थी। यह अनुमान है कि शुल्क में संशोधन के बावजूद राजस्व अधिकांश डाक सेवाओं की प्रचालन लागत को पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं होगा।

(ग) ऐसा अनुमान है कि शुल्क में वृद्धि से प्रतिवर्ष 272 करोड़ रू0 तथा चालू वित्तीय वर्ष में लगभग 159 करोड़ रू0 अतिरिक्त राजस्व प्राप्त होगा।

Commemorative Stamps

547. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of commemorative